Important information for people who apply for or receive TANF

ILLINOIS
DEPOSITORY

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Domestic Violence Exclusion

DHS
Illinois Department of Human Services

What is a domestic violence exclusion?

Domestic violence happens to people of all ages, races, income groups, religions, and educational backgrounds. If you or your child are a victim of past or current domestic violence you may be able to get a domestic violence exclusion. With this exclusion, you do not have to follow some of the rules for the TANF program and your TANF counter stops.

You will be required to show how the violence in your life prevents you from working.

What is domestic violence?

Domestic violence is what someone says or does to make you feel afraid or to control you. These are some examples of domestic violence:

- Swearing or screaming at you
- Threatening to hurt you or others you care about
- Calling you names
- Not letting you leave your house
- Blaming you for everything that goes wrong
- Forcing you to have sex
- Choking, grabbing, punching, or kicking you
- Smashing or breaking things

How do I get a domestic violence exclusion?

If, because of domestic violence, you need to be excused from participation in work and training activities that prepare you for work you must:

- **tell your worker you want a domestic violence exclusion.**
- **show that the violence happened by giving your worker any of these items.**
  - **Medical records**
  - **A statement from a domestic violence worker**
  - **A statement from another professional - like a doctor, nurse, clergy, counselor, social worker - who you told about the abuse**
  - **A statement from someone - like a neighbor, family member or coworker - who knows about the abuse**
  - **Photos of injuries or damage to your property**
  - **A police report**
  - **A copy of an order of protection**

If you need help getting any of these items, talk to a domestic violence worker or your caseworker.

What is an RSP?

An RSP is a Responsibility and Service Plan that you make with your caseworker.

The plan includes activities to help you deal with your abusive situation and become employed.

- The first goal of the plan is to be sure that you and your children are safe.

- The plan can only include work and training activities if it is safe for you and your children. You should work with a person trained in domestic violence and your caseworker to develop a plan that takes into account your situation.

- Make sure you really can meet the goals in your RSP.

Only you know what you can do. Only you know how dangerous your abuser is. If you need to change the plan or cannot follow it, contact your worker as soon as possible.

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Other important things to know:

- If you do not follow the plan in your RSP, you could lose your domestic violence exclusion. If you lose this, you will have to comply with regular employment services rules.

- If you are denied an exclusion, or if it is canceled, you can appeal.

You may be able to get legal advice or help with an appeal from your local legal aid office.

You do not have to tell your caseworker to receive help. For information about a Domestic Violence Program in your area call 1-800-799-7233 (voice) or 1-800-799-3224 (TTY).

You do not have to get an order for protection or attend counseling to get a domestic violence exclusion.

For more information:

Call or visit your local Department of Human Services office.

If you have questions about any Department of Human Services (DHS) program, call or visit your local DHS office. We will answer your questions. If you do not know where your local DHS office is or if you are unable to go there, you may call the automated helpline 24 hours a day at:

1-800-252-8635

1-800-447-6404 (TTY)

You may speak to a representative between:

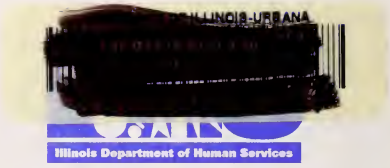
8:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Monday - Friday (except state holidays)

For answers to your questions, you may also write:

Illinois Department of Human Services
Bureau of Customer and Provider Assistance
425 South 4th Street
Springfield, Illinois 62701

Visit our web site at:

www.state.il.us/agency/dhs



Programs, activities and employment opportunities in the Illinois Department of Human Services are open and accessible to any individual or group without regard to age, sex, race, sexual orientation, disability, ethnic origin or religion. The department is an equal opportunity employer and practices affirmative action and reasonable accommodation programs.

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